



VAMPIRES

The allure of the vampire has seduced many a mortal filmmaker over the decades. **REGION 4** goes straight for the jugular with this affectionate tribute to an eclectic collection of screen suckers...



FROM DUSK TILL DAWN (1992)

Writer Quentin Tarantino's years as a video store geek pay off big time in this totally troppo pastiche of classic VHS shockers, shot from the hip by *El Mariachi* director Robert Rodriguez. This post drive-in salute to salsa splatter cunningly masquerades as an edgy crime thriller for its first half until Clooney and co. hit the Titty Twister, an Aztec vampire nest disguised as a sleazy south-of-the-border stripperama. Summarily exploiting, lampooning and reinventing all the requisite vampire cliches, this consistently gobsmacking gem is pure B-movie heaven. And few screen vamps are as voluptuous as Salma Hayek's sultry Satanico Pandemonium. Followed by two direct-to-video sequels - *Texas Blood Money* and *The Hangman's Daughter*, neither worth a look.

BLACULA (1972)

Inevitably the vampire film collided with the funky, afroed world of Blaxploitation in this fabulously titled genre hybrid. After denying the Count pleasures with his wife, an African prince, Manuwalde (William Marshall), is bitten by the enraged Dracula and cursed: "You will be... Blacula!". Revived some 200 years later in 70's LA, Blacula begins a tortured search to be hip and to find his reincarnated wife. While many treasure fond memories of this absurd flick's terrifying impact on them as toddlers, the scariest thing about *Blacula* today is the sight of black folk dancing without rhythm! Followed by a sequel - *Scream, Blacula, Scream!* (1973).

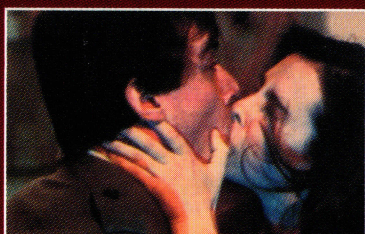


VAMPIRES... or are they?



THE ADDICTION

Student Lili Taylor succumbs to the bloodlust and a lot of spiritual guff in Abel Ferrara's ambitious but pretentious morality play. Is her addiction to blood or to evil?



LIFE FORCE

Tobe Hooper's wacky film of Colin Wilson's novel 'Space Vampires' has a trio of alien vamps gorging themselves on human life energy, trashing London, and wandering about starkers. Wowza!



VAMPIRE'S KISS

What a feeling! Nicolas Cage gets nipped by Jennifer Beals and starts eating bugs, wearing plastic fangs and tormenting his secretary. Intriguing meditation on madness or lame horror comedy?



PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES

Answering a distress call, a bunch of astronauts become possessed by disembodied aliens. Mario Bava's funky 60's shocker might have nothing to do with vampires but it's got a cool title.



John Carpenter's **VAMPIRES** (1998)

By some astonishing rationale critics and John Carpenter fans alike dismissed this sun-bleached and invigorating el cheapo project from the director's well established scare factory. A wisecracking vampire button man (Jimmy Woods) is hired by the Vatican to exterminate the latest Undead Horseman of the Apocalypse. Fittingly the end of the world begins in Arizona, where Woods and his redneck crew experience one of the greatest motel bloodbaths ever filmed, Daniel Baldwin gets to beat up on a blonde before suddenly falling hopelessly in love with his curvaceous punching bag, and a terrific slideguitar score signposts the outrageous posturing of Woods's interpretation of the modern day Marlboro Man.

ZOLTAN: HOUND OF DRACULA (1978)

When a military excavation in Romania unearths a Dracula tomb they also unleash the Count's favourite pooch (a glowing-eyed dog of indeterminate breed) and his cadaverous keeper (*Salem's Lot's* Reggie Nalder). Searching for a new master, Zoltan and his undead pal zero in on Dracula descendant Michael Drake (Michael Pataki) and a game of fetch the stake quickly ensues between the vampire mutt and Drake's whitebread American family. Woof! Also known as *Dracula's Dog* (which was just asking for trouble) and featuring fx by a rookie Stan Winston, *Zoltan: Hound of Dracula* is a risible but undeniably novel genre mongrel that's pure seventies drive-in fare. Foolish, but kinda fun... with enough beer.



CRONOS (1992)

An elderly antiques dealer discovers a mysterious mechanised gadget hidden in the statue of an archangel. The former property of a 16th century alchemist and now coveted by a dying billionaire, the golden scarab-like device has a nasty habit of siphoning the blood of its owner, granting eternal life in return... but at what cost? A fatalistic rumination on the price of immortality and a ripping vampire flick to boot, Mexican director Guillermo Del Toro's classy debut feature oozes atmosphere and inventively subverts established vampire lore, making him the perfect man for the job on *Blade II*.

VAMPIRE SLAYERS



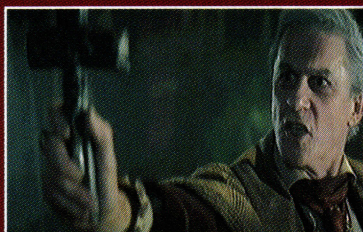
ABRAHAM VAN HELSING

Dutch anthropology professor, vampire hunter and nemesis of Count Dracula. (See: Peter Cushing's definitive portrayal in the Hammer films. Also played by Laurence Olivier and Anthony Hopkins)



BUFFY SUMMERS

"In every generation there is a Chosen One. She alone will stand against the vampires, the demons and the forces of darkness. She is The Slayer." (See: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* TV series and movie)



PETER VINCENT

"Back, spawn of Satan!" Has-been TV horror host and "great vampire killer", reluctantly employed by a paranoid teen who's convinced his new neighbour is a bloodsucker. (See: *Fright Night*)



BLADE

"The power of an immortal, the soul of a human, the heart of a hero." Blade is a "daywalker", moving between light and darkness in his quest to vanquish the vampire scum. (See: *Blade* and *Blade II*)



+ NOSFERATU (1922)

Ok, so contemporary audiences spoiled by too much CGI might find this innovative silent classic a bit creaky, but there's no denying its indelible impact on the genre.

Transylvanian Count Orlock (Max Schreck) relocates to a small village in Bremen, spreading pestilence and terror in his wake. Director F.W. Murnau conjures a stifling, nightmarish atmosphere through flickering monochrome shadows and potent imagery, while star Schreck remains one of the screen's creepiest vamps. An unofficial German adaptation of Bram Stoker's seminal novel, Stoker's widow successfully sued and a court ruled all film prints be destroyed. Thank God they weren't. Remade in 1979 by Werner Herzog and dramatised in *Shadow of the Vampire* (2000).

NEAR DARK (1987)

Naive cowboy Caleb Colton (Adrian Pasdar) is abducted into a nomadic tribe of grungy immortal hellraisers who prowl the midwest after dark in search of blood.

This solo debut feature for director Kathryn Bigelow (*Strange Days*) is a startlingly effective combination of horror, western and road movie whose refusal to adhere to the conventions of the vampire film ironically makes it one of the finest entries in the genre. While the destructive power of sunlight and the hunger for blood remains consistent, the V word is never mentioned and there's even a vague cure for the condition. Besides possessing a striking visual sense, Bigelow's major coup is in the casting of *Aliens* trio Bill Paxton, Lance Henriksen and Jeanette Goldstein as the core of her ruthless vampire pack. An unmissable cult favourite fully deserving of its reputation.



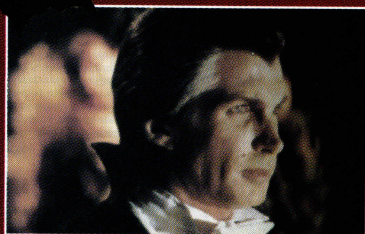
THE LOST BOYS (1987)

Despite the dubious honour of launching Kiefer Sutherland's (fleeting) career, Joel Schumacher's "hip and sexy" teen vampire comedy remains a lively 80's time capsule of peroxide mullets, new romantic threads, slick MTV visuals and the two Coreys. When Jason Patric gets inducted into "the bloodsucking Brady Bunch" his trendy younger bro goes on the defensive with holy water pistols, garlic baths and the obligatory rock soundtrack - "death by stereo". Too flippant for the hardcore vampire purist, but a safer bet than Jim Carrey's *Once Bitten*. A guilty pleasure by any other name.



Drac Attack

Lugosi and Lee's legacy lives on...



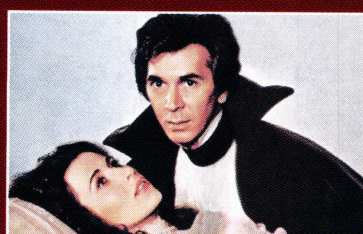
GEORGE HAMILTON

In the 1979 Dracula spoof *Love At First Bite*, George took the Ham from his surname and gave it to his disco dancing Count who goes off to Gloria Gaynor's "I Love the Night Life"... naturally!



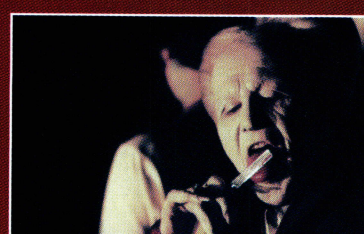
UDO KIER

Following *Flesh For Frankenstein*, genre fave Kier returned for Andy Warhol's *Blood For Dracula* (1974) as a camp Count desperately seeking the blood of a "wirgin" in a bordello.



FRANK LANGELLA

Easily the best thing in John Badham's lavish but laborious 1979 *Dracula* remake. Like Lugosi, the swarthy Langella reprised his stage role - going from Broadway to Badham to *Masters of the Universe*.



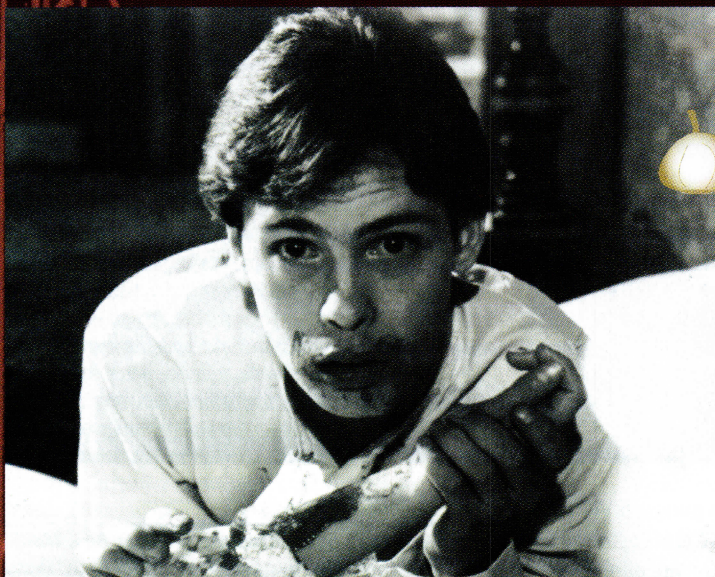
GARY OLDMAN

Serial rogue Oldman can er, count his sincere performance as *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) as a career highlight. But then next to Keanu Reeves and Winona Ryder you're gonna look good anyway.



THE SATANIC RITES OF DRACULA (1973)

The last Hammer film to feature the legendary duo of Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing might be much maligned by vampire devotees but its sheer audacity (and awesome title) makes it worthy of inclusion here. Drac is living it up as a London tycoon and hellbent on destroying mankind with a new strain of Bubonic plague. Van Helsing works for British Intelligence and is assisted by leggy granddaughter Joanna Lumley. Yep, it's Dracula meets *The Avengers* with needless nudity, gratuitous gore, motorcycle chases, seventies kitsch and little regard for vampire lore. Released in a censored version in the US under the uninspiring title *Count Dracula and His Vampire Bride*. An acquired taste.



MARTIN (1978)

Having brought some respectability to the living dead, director George A. Romero brings his distinctive mix of splatter and social subtext to the tale of Martin (John Amplas), a disturbed Pennsylvania youth who believes himself to be an 84-year-old vampire. But is he? This is the central dilemma that drives Romero's insightful and sympathetic portrait. Lacking the conventional fangs, the bloodthirsty teen uses razor blades and syringes to get at the red stuff, reporting his nefarious exploits to a late-night talkback radio station while his olde world uncle becomes convinced that he is "Nosferatu". Offering a unique perspective on vampirism sans the gothic trappings, *Martin* is often overlooked and vastly underappreciated.

INNOCENT BLOOD (1992)

Craving Italian, sexy French vampire Marie (*La Femme Nikita's* Anne Parillaud) snacks on mob heavy Sal 'The Shark' Macelli (Robert Loggia) only to inadvertently create a new breed of bloodsucking gangster. Packed to the gills with energetic action sequences, welcome nudity, outrageous fx, director cameos (Sam Raimi, Dario Argento) and most of *The Sopranos* cast, John Landis's rambunctious mix of monsters and mobsters is an undiscovered gem ripe for reappraisal. And it's the only time you'll ever see the great Don Rickles disintegrate, which has gotta be recommendation enough. A cut version was released in Oz as *A French Vampire in America*.



Vampyros Lesbos Sexy sapphic suckers...



THE HUNGER (1983)

As immortal beauty Miriam Blaylock, Catherine Deneuve's soft focus lesbian romp with Susan Sarandon made much more sense than her desire for a rapidly withering David Bowie.



THE VAMPIRE LOVERS (1970)

Sheridan Le Fanu's novel 'Carmilla' gets the gothic Hammer treatment with Ingrid Pitt and Kate O'Mara directing the sapphic traffic before being beheaded by a bemused Peter Cushing.



VAMPYRES (1974)

Gunned down in the opening moments, a lesbian couple (including Playboy Playmate Anulka) return as vamps, luring victims to their mansion for a bloody bedroom tryst. But what a way to go!



LUST FOR A VAMPIRE (1971)

Sequel to *Vampire Lovers* and Hammer's most titillating outing as lesbo vamp Carmilla Karnstein teaches a 19th century girls finishing school more about tits and arse than they'd learn in class.